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# Security Council

Fifty-seventh year

*Provisional*

## 4506th meeting

Thursday, 4 April 2002, 7 p.m.
New York

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| *President:* | Mr. Lavrov | (Russian Federation) |
| *Members:* | Bulgaria | Mr. Tafrov |
| | Cameroon | Mr. Belinga-Eboutou |
| | China | Mr. Wang Yingfan |
| | Colombia | Mr. Rivas |
| | France | Mr. Levitte |
| | Guinea | Mr. Fall |
| | Ireland | Mr. Ryan |
| | Mauritius | Mr. Bhuckory |
| | Mexico | Mr. Aguilar Zinser |
| | Norway | Mr. Kolby |
| | Singapore | Mr. Mahbubani |
| | Syrian Arab Republic | Mr. Wehbe |
| | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | Sir Jeremy Greenstock |
| | United States of America | Mr. Negroponte |

## Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question

Letter dated 1 April 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2002/336)

Letter dated 2 April 2002 from the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2002/342)

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02-31733 (E)

*The meeting resumed at 7 p.m.*

**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): Members of the Council have before them document S/2002/347, which contains the text of a draft resolution prepared in the course of the Council's prior consultations.

**Mr. Wehbe** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me, Mr. President, to express our great appreciation for all the efforts that you and the other members of the Council have made to unify the voice of the Council before the challenges faced by our region. The Council has acted, in view of the escalation of the Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people and Israel's occupation of the cities of Ramallah, Tulkarm, Qalqilyah, Bethlehem, Nablus and Jenin. In view of Israel's violation of humanitarian law and the Fourth Geneva Convention, the position we shall be adopting by supporting the draft resolution before us is an expression of our firm support and our constant call for the establishment of an independent Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital.

When the Arab Group submitted the draft resolution, its objective was to call upon the international community to understand the trials and sufferings of the Palestinian people, the oppression they are suffering at the hands of the Israeli occupation forces. Syria's position in supporting the draft resolution reflects our genuine desire to see the Security Council assume its role effectively, and once again affirms the importance of unity in the work of the Council and of unanimous action to address anything that would endanger international peace and security.

**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): The representative of Israel has asked for the floor, and I call upon him now.

**Mr. Lancry** (Israel): At the outset, I would like to express my profound gratitude for the presence of His Excellency Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his highly significant contribution to the proceedings of the Security Council in its recent discussions.

Today's draft resolution comes after this morning's important statement by President Bush, in which he announced that Secretary of State Powell would be travelling to the region to work for the implementation of resolution 1402 (2002). For its part, Israel is willing, in full cooperation with General Zinni and now with Secretary Powell, to engage in steps, together with reciprocal Palestinian actions, to achieve an immediate and meaningful ceasefire, the withdrawal of the Israeli troops, the implementation of Tenet and Mitchell and an end to all acts of terrorism and incitement, in accordance with resolutions 1397 (2002) and 1402 (2002).

In President Bush's highly valuable statement today, he again articulated his vision for peace in the Middle East, including the end of terrorism and incitement, the withdrawal of Israeli forces and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State, living side by side in peace and security, with Israel. The President indicated to both sides what steps should be taken to bring about meaningful and peaceful coexistence, including dignity and hope for all.

Israel is giving President Bush's statement the careful attention it is due. We will reassess the situation in the light of its major operative parts, concerning

> "an immediate and meaningful ceasefire; an end to terror and violence and incitement; withdrawal of Israeli troops from Palestinian cities, including Ramallah; implementation of the already agreed upon Tenet and Mitchell plans".

We further support the forthcoming mission of Secretary Powell to the region. The presence of Secretary Powell is a powerful demonstration of the American commitment to ending the violence and bringing peace to the region. Israel pledges to spare no effort to cooperate fully with Secretary Powell to make his mission a success, and to bring about a genuine and meaningful ceasefire that will pave the way for a return to the negotiating process.

I do not believe that anything must be added to the President's statement with regard to the Palestinian terrorism and to the Palestinian leader, Chairman Arafat. I do wish, however, to add to President Bush's expressed concern regarding the continuing assaults by Hizbullah along Israel's northern border. Hizbullah's actions are a clear and unambiguous violation of the Blue Line, international law and the will of the Security Council. That fact has been brought to the Council's attention repeatedly in letters I have addressed to the Secretary-General, in numerous reports of the Secretary-General and in his most recent briefing to the Council just a few days ago.

In this regard, I would like to refer briefly to the statement delivered yesterday by the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic. Although

we do not always agree with the statements of the Syrian representative, either in their form or in their essence, we were, of course, attentive to the message he delivered yesterday.

I will not respond here to those aspects of his statement that were filled with hatred and distortions. But one aspect of the statement deserves to be addressed at this time of rising tensions along the Blue Line. That is the Syrian representative's allegation of Israeli contempt for United Nations resolutions. I feel obligated to recall that despite Israel's full and confirmed implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978), in full accordance with the will of the Council, Syria continues to exhibit total disregard for that resolution. Through its overwhelming control of Lebanon and its continued support for Hizbullah, violations of the Blue Line now occur on a regular basis in direct violation of resolution 425 (1978) and subsequent resolutions.

Today, these dangerous and illegitimate attacks continued for the sixth consecutive day, with the firing of anti-tank, anti-aircraft and Katyusha rockets at civilian and military targets in northern Israel. In addition, three unarmed United Nations observers and two peacekeepers were injured by Hizbullah forces in southern Lebanon. The observers, citizens of Ireland, Norway and France, were beaten up by Hizbullah gunmen and had to be evacuated to hospitals in northern Israel.

Ironically, it is a member of the Security Council that is defying the consensus reflected in resolution 425 (1978) with impunity and is enabling such reprehensible attacks to occur. In this respect, we are obliged to deplore not only the violations of the Blue Line and of resolution 425 (1978), which continue even as we speak, but even more the fact that a State Member of the United Nations that is also a member of the Security Council is deliberately thwarting the implementation of a resolution of a body of which it itself is a member. Yes, Israel realizes that Member States should respect Security Council resolutions, but I do not believe it is superfluous to remind the Syrian representative that this applies to Syria as well.

The situation along the Blue Line poses the threat of regional stability being undermined, owing to Hizbullah's clear intent to escalate current hostilities into a broader confrontation. It is imperative that the Council act immediately to force the Governments of Iran, Syria and Lebanon to halt the illegal terrorist activities of Hizbullah.

We are at a crucial moment for our region, but once again, because of the resolve and the leadership of the President of the United States and the contribution of the international community, we again have cause for hope.

**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): The Permanent Observer of Palestine has asked for the floor, and I call on him now.

**Mr. Al-Kidwa** (Palestine) (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish at the outset to thank you, Mr. President, for your efforts. Our thanks go also to all the other members of the Council. I also wish to reiterate our heartfelt thanks and appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his constant, tireless efforts to put an end to the tragedy in the Middle East.

The Council is about to adopt yet another very important draft resolution by consensus. I would like to say here that we appreciate very much the position of our sister country, Syria, reflected in its willingness to support the draft resolution and to cooperate with all international efforts for the reasons set out a few moments ago by the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

The Security Council has important assets, embodied in resolutions 1402 (2002) and 1397 (2002) and in today's draft resolution. Let us benefit from those assets in order to help the peace efforts in the region. Let us start with the first step called for in the draft resolution: the implementation of resolution 1402 (2002) without delay.

I also wish to refer to the important statement made by President Bush today, which is now being studied by President Arafat and the rest of the Palestinian leadership, who are experiencing difficult circumstances, of which I am sure all members are aware. Of course, we greatly value what the statement reflects in terms of the readiness of the United States to be deeply involved in the peace efforts at the highest level. We also fully appreciate the new step in response to the political and security situation.

We have noted that the statement calls on Israel to put an end to military operations and to withdraw from Palestinian cities, including Ramallah. We have also noted that the statement calls for an immediate ceasefire and for the implementation of the Tenet plan

and the Mitchell recommendations as they stand. We have also noted the call to put an end to the settlements and to combat terrorism, including the infrastructure of terrorism networks.

We have also taken note of the call for an end to the occupation and for Israel's withdrawal to the borders in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). This is based on a vision of two States, Israel and a politically and economically viable Palestine.

All of that is definitely positive. It goes without saying that we have reservations concerning the unjustified criticism addressed to President Arafat, the elected President of the Palestinians and the symbol of Palestinian identity.

We believe that we need to overcome the legitimate fears of the Palestinian side so that we can all move forward as rapidly as possible towards the implementation of agreements and can put an end to the ongoing tragedy in order to establish a comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East. Whatever the circumstances, we, of course, welcome the visit of Mr. Powell to the region. I can assure the Council that President Arafat is entirely willing to cooperate with Mr. Powell to ensure the success of his mission in order to put an end to the ongoing tragedy and to return to the path of peace.

I thank all friendly countries, our Arab brothers, the Non-Aligned Movement, the members of the Security Council and particularly the States that have sent special envoys to the Middle East.

**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the Permanent Observer of Palestine for his kind words addressed to the members of the Security Council.

**Mr. Wehbe** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): We are moments away from the Council's adoption of a very important draft resolution. We shall vote in favour of the draft resolution for reasons of unanimity and the unity of the Council. We are doing this with a view to halting Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people.

We have no intention whatever of transforming this meeting into an occasion to indulge in rhetoric, as the Israeli representative would wish. The Syrian record is well known to all members of the Council and of the Organization, and that record is an honourable one. When Syria succeeded in being elected to the Security Council it was with a majority vote of 160 Members. The members of the Council are well aware of the considerable contributions made by Syria in dealing with the various problems before the Council relating to the maintenance of international peace and security. I have no need to respond to the allegations and false claims made by the Israeli representative, and I do not intend to turn this meeting into a competition in polemics.

Resolution 425 (1978) has not been implemented in full. The implementation that has taken place occurred with resistance. Yet even now there are daily aerial violations aimed at terrifying the citizens of Lebanon. When there is resistance to that, everything is topsy-turvy. We are not here this evening to repeat that Israel has not implemented all relevant resolutions — particularly those of the Security Council. We are here to adopt another draft resolution because Israel has not implemented the two most recently adopted resolutions.

**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): I welcome the presence among us of the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, and I give him the floor.

**The Secretary-General**: The situation in the Middle East — between Israel and Palestine and across the Blue Line — continues to deteriorate. All parties risk making serious miscalculations about the effect that their actions will have on one another. Such miscalculations can all too easily draw the region into greater and greater danger, whether intended or not.

My purpose in addressing the Security Council today is to call on all members of the international community to consider urgently how best to intercede with the parties to persuade them to draw back from their present course.

In the Palestinian-Israeli arena, Security Council resolution 1402 (2002) provides the elements needed to begin to de-escalate the present crisis, and resolution 1397 (2002) provides the framework for a permanent settlement. We all need to intensify our efforts to see that those resolutions are implemented without further delay.

Israeli actions since the adoption of Security Council resolution 1402 (2002) do not bode well for stabilizing the situation and renewing political talks. On the contrary, the Government of Israel appears to be moving in the opposite direction to that prescribed by

resolutions 1397 (2002) and 1402 (2002) — a sure path to further escalation. Israel has justified its acts as self-defence and counter-terrorist measures. However, we need to be very clear that self-defence is not a blank cheque. It is important to understand that responding to terrorism does not in any way free Israel from its obligations under international law; nor does it justify creating a human rights and humanitarian crisis within the occupied Palestinian territory. There is an urgent need to comply with all provisions of international law, particularly those that ban indiscriminate and disproportionate use of force as well as the humiliating treatment of a civilian population.

Forcing Chairman Arafat into exile would be reckless. He is the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and his exile would only lead to even more violence and chaos. Deportation is specifically prohibited by the Fourth Geneva Convention. It would be a miscalculation of monumental proportions to believe that removing Chairman Arafat from the political scene and dismantling the Palestinian Authority would create conditions where Israel can achieve security for itself.

I understand the bitterness, anger and disillusion felt by Israelis. But, the military route taken by the Government of Israel will not pacify the Palestinians. Nor do I see how this approach can bring peace and security to Israel. Only a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement can do so. If we have learned anything from history, it is that it is a grave mistake for the more powerful party to believe that power alone will ultimately subdue the weaker party. In fact, what we are witnessing is an increase in the resolve and unity of the Palestinians, as well as increasing public anger across the Arab and Islamic world and beyond.

I am not arguing that the spiralling violence is to be blamed on one party alone. The Palestinian Authority seems to believe that failing to act against terrorism and inducing turmoil, chaos and instability will cause the Government and people of Israel to buckle. They will not. As we are seeing, this approach is only spurring on the Israeli Government in its present course; it also unites the Israeli public behind the military option. We should not forget that it was not so long ago that this same Israeli public was supportive of peace efforts by a large majority.

Under direct assault from the Israeli military, Chairman Arafat and the Palestinian security services are seriously limited in their ability to contain terrorism. However, even now, Chairman Arafat has the capacity to exercise political leadership — to set the course for the future of his people. Terrorism is never justified. The Palestinian leadership must acknowledge this and the Palestinian public must accept this.

I would like to take this opportunity to call on the Government of Israel to give the "quartet" full access to the compound of Chairman Arafat and to the Chairman himself. Together with General Zinni's mission, the "quartet" arrangement could be used as an effective instrument to pursue implementation of 1402 (2002).

There have been persistent reports about limitations placed on access by humanitarian and medical workers to those Palestinians in urgent need of assistance. It is imperative that humanitarian workers and agencies such as the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Red Crescent Society and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East be granted full access to persons in those affected areas.

There is plenty of reason for pessimism. But there is at least one recent positive development. The promise represented by the Arab League's Beirut Summit marked a significant turning point. We need to ensure that the Saudi initiative, endorsed by the Arab League, does not founder. Let us hold onto and nourish that vision amid the encircling gloom and the worrying rise in regional tension.

Here, I would like to express very serious concern over events along the Blue Line. I recalled in the Council recently that Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon was in compliance with resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978), and was recognized as such by the Council itself. We must make sure that all sides respect the Blue Line. Escalation along the Blue Line could have serious consequences for peace and security in the region — beyond Israel and Lebanon — as we know from the past. There seem to be efforts coming from Lebanese territory to deliberately create instability along the Blue Line.

In addition to recent attacks by Hizbullah across the Blue Line, this morning Hizbullah elements

assaulted a patrol of military observers from the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).

It needs to be made clear to Hizbullah and others who may be involved that attacks across the Blue Line — whether into northern Israel or into occupied Syrian territory — are violations of Security Council resolutions, and are not acceptable. I strongly urge those with influence to ensure adherence to the Council resolutions on this subject. The Government of Lebanon will be aware that it is responsible for any hostile actions undertaken from its territory.

In this connection, I have been in contact over the last 24 hours with leaders in the region. Also, my Personal Representative in Lebanon, Mr. De Mistura, and the Force Commander of UNIFIL, yesterday met with Council members who have representatives in Beirut, as well as with the Lebanese leadership, about the situation.

Let me conclude by saying that the building blocks of peace, once broken down, are not easily rebuilt. Recent events have had a further, severely corrosive, effect on mutual confidence. On both sides, bitterness and despair are at an all-time high. We all need to cling to the conviction that, in the end, however long it takes, there will one day have to be a peaceful settlement of this conflict.

Third-party mediation is needed more than ever, as the parties are unable on their own to find a way out of the present situation. In this connection, I strongly welcome President Bush's decision to send Secretary Powell to the region.

The road back to the negotiating table will not be easy or smooth. But all sides can take the first steps by exercising maximum restraint so as to reverse the current dangerous deterioration of the situation.

Resolutions 1397 (2002) and 1402 (2002), taken together, provide the vision for a permanent settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the immediate security and political steps needed to move beyond the present crisis. Our efforts need to focus on implementing those resolutions.

**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

It is my understanding that the Security Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution (S/2002/347) before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

*A vote was taken by a show of hands.*

*In favour*:

Bulgaria, Cameroon, China, Colombia, France, Guinea, Ireland, Mauritius, Mexico, Norway, Russian Federation, Singapore, Syrian Arab Republic, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1403 (2002).

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

*The meeting rose at 7.35 p.m.*